

THE DESCRIPTION OF  
THE PROPHET'S

صلى الله  
عليه  
وسلم

*Fast*



# The Description of the Prophet's Fast



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All praise belongs to Allah. May the salah and salam [of Allah] be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him. As for what follows:

This is a summary of the description of the Prophet's (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) fast and what it comprises in terms of obligations, manners, supplications. And with regards to the rulings of fasting, the categories of people in it, things that break the fast, and other benefits on what is permissible. We ask Allah to guide the Muslimin to practicing the sunnah of their Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) in every major or minor issue. And it is Allah who grants success.

**The definition of fasting:** It is the worship of Allah by leaving all the things that invalidate fasting, from dawn to sunset.

**The fast of Ramadan:** It is one of the greatest pillars of Islam due to the saying of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), "Islam is

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built upon five; testifying that there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger, establishing the salah, giving the zakah, fasting the month of Ramadan, and performing the Hajj to the House of Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Categories of People in Ramadan**

- **Fasting** is obligatory upon every Muslim who has attained the age of puberty, mentally sound, able, and not on a journey.
- **A disbeliever** does not fast, and it is not obligatory upon him to make up the fast if he accepts Islam.
- **A small child** who has not attained puberty is not obligated to fast. However, he should be asked to fast so that he can get used to it.
- **A sick person** who casually falls sick and finds it difficult to fast is allowed to break the fast but makes it up when he gets better.

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<sup>1</sup> Agreed upon.

· **An insane person** is not obligated to fast, neither is feeding [a needy] on his behalf required, even if he were an older person. Likewise, an imbecile and a person who has lost his senses due to old age.

· **A person who is too weak** to fast due to a permanent reason such as old age or a sickness that has no hope of cure, feeds one in need for each day missed.

· **A pregnant or a breastfeeding woman**, who finds it difficult to fast because of her pregnancy or baby, should break the fast and make it up whenever it is easy for her.

· **Women under menstruation or postpartum bleeding** do not fast while in that condition. They should make up what they missed.

· **One who is compelled** to break the fast in order to save a life from drowning or fire is allowed to break the fast and make it up later.

· **The traveller** if wants he can fast and if he wants he can break the fast and make up what he missed. This applies to one whose journey is casual like one going for ‘Umrah and one who travels always like taxi drivers. They are allowed to break the fast if they want as long as they are not in their towns.

## **Rulings Related to Fasting**

### **1. Intention.**

It is obligatory to make the intention for an obligatory fast before dawn because of the saying of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), “Whoever does not make the intention to fast before dawn has no fast.”<sup>2</sup> The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said, “Whoever does not make the intention for fast

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<sup>2</sup> Related by Abu Dawud, an-Nasai, and others. At-Tirmidhi and an-Nasai considered it to be a saying of a companion, while ibn Khuzaymah and ibn Hibban considered it authentic as a saying of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam).

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from the night has no fast.”<sup>3</sup> The place of intention is in the heart and pronouncing it was neither reported from the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) nor from any of his companions (radiyallahu ‘anhum).

## 2. Time for the Fast.

He (ta‘ala) said, “And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night].” **There are two types of dawns:**

- **The false dawn:** this does not make the dawn salah permissible and does not prohibit eating for a person fasting. It is a glaring extended whiteness observed in the horizon like the tail of a wolf.
- **The true dawn:** it is the one that prohibits a fasting person from eating and makes the Fajr salah permissible. It is an

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<sup>3</sup> Related by ad-Daraqutni and an-Nasai. Ibn Hajr and al-Albani said its chain is sahih. Ibn Hajr said, “Its chain is sahih, although there is disagreement over whether it is mawquf or marfu’.”

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extended horizontal redness observed over the mountains.

### 3. The Suhur.

The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “The distinguishing factor between our fast and that of the people of the Book is the suhur.”<sup>4</sup> The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said, “There is blessing in three things: congregation, porridge, and suhur.”<sup>5</sup> That the suhur is a blessing is evident and one is not supposed to abandon it because it is a mark of adherence to the Sunnah, and it gives one strength to bear the fast. It is also a blessed nutrient as the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) called it, “Come to the blessed nutrient.”<sup>6</sup> And he (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa

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<sup>4</sup> Related by Muslim.

<sup>5</sup> Related by at-Tabarani. The author of *Majma’ az-Zawaid* said, “In it is Abu ‘Abdillah al-Basri, and adh-Dhahabi said, ‘He is not known, but the rest of them are trustworthy.’” Al-Albani graded it hasan li-ghayrihi.

<sup>6</sup> Related by Abu Dawud, ibn Khuzaymah, and others. The author, al-Albani, and ibn Khuzaymah, considered it authentic, and adh-Dhahabi considered the hadith to have strong



sallam) said, “Suhur is a blessed meal, so do not omit it, even if one of you only takes a sip of water, for Allah and His angels send blessings on those who eat suhur.”<sup>7</sup> The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said, “The best suhur of a believer is dates.”<sup>8</sup> It was the practice of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to delay the suhur to closely before the time of Fajr.

#### **4. What a Person Fasting Must Abstain From.**

- **False statements.** The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whoever does not abstain from false statements and

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witnessing reports. After relating it, Abu Dawud remained silent with regards to it, indicating it was salih according to him.

<sup>7</sup> Related by Ahmad. The author of *Majma’ az-Zawaid* said, “In it is Abu Rifa’ah, and I did not find anyone labeling him trustworthy or disparaging him. The rest of the men are trustworthy.” Al-Albani graded it hasan li-ghayrihi.

<sup>8</sup> Related by Abu Dawud and others. After relating it, Abu Dawud remained silent with regards to it, indicating it was salih according to him, and al-Albani graded it sahih.

acting upon it, Allah does not need him to abstain from food and drink.”<sup>9</sup>

- **Foul and obscene talks.** The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Fasting is not just abstaining from food and drink. Rather, fasting is abstaining from foul and obscene talks. So when anyone abuses you or acts ignorantly towards you, say: I am fasting.”

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## 5. What is Permissible for One Fasting.

- **A person fasting waking up in a state of impurity.** ‘Aishah narrated that, “He used to wake up at Fajr while he was in a state of impurity, then he would take his bath and fast.”<sup>11</sup>

- **Using the siwak.** The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “If not that I don’t want to make things difficult for my

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<sup>9</sup> Related by al-Bukhari.

<sup>10</sup> Related by ibn Khuzaymah and ibn Hibban. They both considered it authentic, along with al-Albani.

<sup>11</sup> Agreed upon.

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ummah, I would have commanded them to use the siwak during every ablution.”<sup>12</sup> The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) did not differentiate between the person fasting and others. This shows that siwak can be used by the one fasting and others during every ablution and salah, and also at all times before the sun passes the meridian and after that.

· **Washing the mouth and sniffing water into the nose.** The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to wash his mouth and sniff water into his nose while fasting. However, he prohibited the one fasting from doing it in extremes. He (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “And sniff water into the nose thoroughly except when you are fasting.”<sup>13</sup>

· **Caressing and kissing of the spouse.** ‘Aishah narrated that: “The Prophet (sallallahu

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<sup>12</sup> Agreed upon.

<sup>13</sup> Related by Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, and others. After relating it, Abu Dawud remained silent with regards to it, indicating it was salih according to him, and at-Tirmidhi and al-Albani considered it authentic.

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‘alayhi wa sallam) used to kiss when fasting and touched his wives while fasting but he was stronger than you in controlling his desires.”<sup>14</sup> This is detested for a young man not the aged. The Prophet said, “...the aged can control himself.”<sup>15</sup>

· **Blood tests and taking injection not meant to serve as nutrients to the body.**

This does not break the fast because it is not a nutrient to the body and it does not reach the stomach

· **Removal of a tooth.** This does not break the fast.

· **Testing food.** This is restricted to it not passing the throat, and the same applies to using toothpaste. This is due to the narration from ibn ‘Abbas (radiyallahu ‘anhu), “There is no problem if he tastes vinegar or anything else

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<sup>14</sup> Agreed upon.

<sup>15</sup> Related by Ahmad. Ahmad Shakir graded it sahih, and al-Albani graded it hasan, respectively.

while fasting as long as it does not pass through the throat.”<sup>16</sup>

· **Using kohl or eye drops and the likes.** All of these do not break the fast whether the person feels it in the throat or not. Imam al-Bukhari said in his sahih, “Anas, Hasan, and Ibrahim, never saw anything wrong in the use of kohl by a person fasting.”

## **6. Breaking the Fast.**

· **Hastening to break the fast** is from the Sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and it is a way of opposing the Jews and the Christians because they delay it and their delaying of it has a limit which is the appearance of the stars. The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “My ummah will continue to be upon good as long as they hasten to break the fast.”<sup>17</sup> He (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) also said, “My ummah will continue to be on my sunnah as long as they

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<sup>16</sup> Related by al-Bukhari.

<sup>17</sup> Agreed upon.

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do not wait for the appearance of the stars before breaking their fast.”<sup>18</sup>

· **Breaking the fast before the Maghrib salah.** Anas ibn Malik narrated that “the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to break the fast before he performed salah.”<sup>19</sup> And he would break his fast before praying with fresh dates, and if there were no fresh dates then with dry dates, and if there were no dry dates then with some sips of water.

· **What should you use to break the fast?** Anas ibn Malik narrated that “would break his fast before praying with fresh dates, and if there were no fresh dates then with dry dates, and if there were no dry dates then with some sips of water.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Related by ibn Hibban and ibn Khuzaymah, both considering it authentic. The author and al-Albani, as well, considered it authentic.

<sup>19</sup> Reported by Abu Dawud and others. The author and al-Albani considered it hasan.

<sup>20</sup> Related by Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi. Abu ‘Isa said, “This hadith is hasan gharib,” indicating there is some weakness to it. Al-Albani considered it hasan, while al-‘Alwan considers it defective.

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· **What should you say while breaking the fast?** The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “The person fasting has a supplication which is not rejected.”<sup>21</sup> And he (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to supplicate while breaking his fast by saying, “The thirst has gone, the veins are moist, and the reward is assured, if Allah wills.”<sup>22</sup>

## 7. Nullifiers of the Fast.

· **Eating and drinking intentionally.** It is all the same whether what is been consumed is beneficial to the body or harmful like smoking cigarettes. However, if he does that forgetfully, mistakenly, or under duress, then there is no blame upon him, if Allah wills. The Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “If he forgetfully eats and drink, let him complete

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<sup>21</sup> Related by ibn Majah. Al-Albani considered it weak.

<sup>22</sup> Related by Abu Dawud. After relating it, Abu Dawud remained silent with regards to it, indicating it was salih according to him. And al-Albani and ad-Daraqutni considered it hasan, while al-‘Alwan said its chain is jayyid, respectively.

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his fast for it was Allah who fed him and gave him drink.”<sup>23</sup>

· **Vomiting intentionally.** The Prophet said (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whoever is overpowered by vomiting does not have to make it up and whoever vomits intentionally let him make up the fast.”<sup>24</sup>

· **Sexual intercourse.** If this occurs during the day of Ramadan from a person who is obliged to fast, then he must make it up along with making an expiation for it by freeing a slave. If he does not find a slave, then he should fast two consecutive months. If he is unable, then he should feed sixty needy people.

· **Taking nutritional injection.** These kinds of injections nullify the fast.

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<sup>23</sup> Agreed upon.

<sup>24</sup> Related by Abu Dawud and at-Tirmidhi. Ibn Taymiyyah said, “Those who do not affirm the hadith in question do so because it has not reached them through a dependable route. They indicate that it has a deficiency, in that it was narrated exclusively by ‘Isa ibn Yunus. But as is clear, he is not alone with it, rather it was also narrated by Hafs ibn Ghiyath, and the other hadith supports it.”



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- **Menstruation and postpartum bleeding.** The release of blood by a woman at any time of the day whether at the beginning or at the end breaks her fast and she has to make it up

- **Ejaculation of sperm** whether awake through masturbation, fondling, kissing, or the likes. As for ejaculation of sperm through wet dreams, it does not nullify the fast because it was not intended by the person.<sup>25</sup>

## 8. Making up the Fast.

- It is preferable to hasten to make up any missed fasting, and it is not obligatory to do so consecutively. The people of knowledge agree that whoever dies while he has some salawat to make up, it has passed him and no one should make it up for him. Likewise, whoever is

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<sup>25</sup> The author did not mention cupping in the matters which break one's fast, however, if one was to look at the argument of both sides, the ones who held the opinion that cupping breaks the fast has the stronger argument. Shaykhul-Islam has some nice words on the issue, and it is mentioned in *From Dabiq To Rome* (issue #11). And Allah knows best.

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unable to fast, no one should fast for him while he is alive. Rather, he should feed a needy person for each day missed. However, whoever dies while he has some fasting he owes, his guardian should fast on his behalf because of the saying of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), “Whoever dies while he has a fast to observe, his guardian should make it up for him.”<sup>26</sup>

## **9. Fasting Along with Leaving the Salah.**

· Whoever fasts but leaves the salah has indeed left out the most important pillar among the pillars of Islam after tawhid. His fast will not benefit him anything as long as he leaves the salah, because salah is the mainstay of the Din upon which it is established. A person who leaves the salah is judged with kufr, and the deeds of a kafir are not accepted due to the saying of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam), “The covenant that stands

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<sup>26</sup> Agreed upon.

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between us and them is the salah, whoever abandons it has disbelieved.”<sup>27</sup>

## **10. Qiyam al-Layl (Tarawih).**

· Indeed the sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) is to establish the qiyam al-layl (tarawih) during Ramadan in congregation, then he left in fear that it would become obligatory on the ummah and that they may not be able to observe it. The rak‘ah number is eight apart from the witr due to the hadith of ‘Aishah (radiyallahu ‘anha), “The Prophet never used to go beyond eleven rak‘ah whether in Ramadan or outside it.”<sup>28</sup>

· When ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (radiyallahu ‘anhu) revived this sunnah he added to the eleven rak‘ah. During his time they performed twenty three rak‘ah and after that they performed thirty nine rak‘ah. And twenty three rak‘ah is what is practiced in the Two

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<sup>27</sup> Related by at-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, and others. Ibn Hibban, at-Tirmidhi, ibn Taymiyyah, and many others, considered it authentic.

<sup>28</sup> Agreed upon.

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Venerable Sanctuaries; which is the opinion of three out of the four aimmah.<sup>29</sup>

· One of the calamities that has befallen the Muslimin today in tarawih is extreme haste in recitation, ruku', and sujud. This violates and deprives the salah and its khushu', and it indeed could nullify it at times. And the help of Allah is sought.

## **11. Zakah al-Fitr.**

· It is obligatory due to the hadith of ibn 'Umar (radiyallahu 'anhu), "The Prophet made Zakah al-Fitr obligatory from Ramadan upon the people."<sup>30</sup> The Zakah al-Fitr is obligatory upon the young and old, male and female, the free and slaves among the Muslimin. The quantity to be given out is one sa' of the most prevalent and stable foods in that particular

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<sup>29</sup> During the time of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) he used to prolong the recitation, ruku', and sujud. Thus the aimmah mentioned to shorter the duration of each salah and increase the number of rak'ah, in order to make it easy for the common people.

<sup>30</sup> Agreed upon.

land, if he has an excess of what he needs for the days and night and to feed his children. And it is the most beneficial to give it to the poor. The time for giving it out is on the day of 'Id before the salah. It is permissible to give it out a day or two before then but is not permissible to delay it beyond the day of 'Id.

